

Point Three

February
1986 10p



The monthly magazine of TOC H



Point Three

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Opinions expressed (including the editorial) are those of the individual contributors and not necessarily those of the Toc H Movement.

Point Three is available from the Toc H Publications Department, 1 Forest Close, Wendover, Bucks HP22 6BT. (Telephone: 0296 623911).

Price: currently 10p per copy (£1.20 per year). From 1 April 1986 20p per copy or £2 per year subscription. Any contribution towards the high cost of postage will be gratefully accepted.



Toc H seeks to create friendship and understanding among people of all backgrounds and beliefs. Local group activities range from holidays for the handicapped and children's playschemes to arts festivals and even bird watching. Toc H is short for Talbot House — the soldiers' club in Belgium founded by the Reverend 'Tubby' Clayton in 1915. Today Toc H provides opportunities for people to test the relevance of practical Christianity and we welcome anyone who would like to give us a try.

Members accept a four fold commitment:

1. To build friendships across the barriers that divide man from man.
2. To give personal service.
3. To find their own convictions while always being willing to listen to the views of others.
4. To work for the Kingdom of God.

This magazine, which acts as a forum for ideas about Toc H and about the world in which we live, takes its title from the third of these Four Points — to think fairly.

Cover Picture

Two participants in the hugely successful Toc H Marafun held at Trent Park in North London. Over 80 people took part and £2,250 was raised.

Photo: Barnet Press

Guest Editorial

The big one for General Synod

Last autumn, for the first time in my life, I had a vote in the election of the General Synod of the Church of England. As a result I received a massive envelope with details on the candidates, each of whom — there were about 35 in our diocese — had given information about his or her views on the main issues to be debated in Synod. (Incidentally, I warmly welcome the Toc H innovation whereby Central Executive candidates are asked to give their views on the Movement so that councillors can make an informed decision about whom to vote for. But that's another story.) As I read through the mountain of paper and tried to decide for whom I should deign to cast my valuable vote I found that I was using as a litmus test the candidates' views on the ordination of women.

Only after the exercise was complete did I pause to consider whether that made sense. Was this really the most important issue facing the new Synod? In a world where millions starve, in a world whose very survival is threatened by ever-growing stocks of nuclear weapons, in a country increasingly divided, increasingly a prey to violence, could it be right to judge candidates simply by their attitudes to one aspect of the Church's internal administration? Were there not more crucial ways in which Synod would be called to witness to the Gospel of Jesus?

The more I reflected the more it seemed to me that I was right to have stumbled on this particular issue. The Church will be gravely hampered in its task of acting as a channel for the reconciling love of God until it has achieved a wholeness in its own ministry. It will be hampered until its male members have come to terms with the female in their own natures, its female members with the male. It will be hampered until it has come to terms with a God who transcends male and female.

The ordination of women, then, is a very much deeper question than may at first appear. It raises profound questions about the nature of the Church and, indeed, about the nature of the teaching of Jesus itself. It's not just a question of whether it is right to exclude people from certain functions within the Church simply because they are female. That's an important question but the issues it raises are far deeper — hence, no doubt, the powerful emotions aroused on both sides. I believe, for instance, that it raises the question of whether the Church is supposed to be a genuine community or an hierarchical institution. And because of the deep emotions involved it's one of those questions whose discussion usually generates more heat than light.

The ordination of women seems to me so obvious and simple a step that I have genuinely found it very difficult to understand what all the fuss is about. The argument from tradition is simply to say that because a thing has always been so it must always be so in the future, which is a logical absurdity and would ensure that nothing is ever changed anywhere. The one argument that carries any weight with me is that this particular change would be deeply divisive. But not to make the change will also be divisive. While the Bishop of London makes his increasingly vociferous threats to leave the Church if women are ordained, many, if they are not, will quietly vote with their feet.

Such divisions are sad and painful. The damage, if damage there be, to relations with the Roman Catholic Church will be sad. Yet there are times when truth is more important than compromise — and this, in any event, seems to be an issue on which compromise is not possible.

This is not, as you will have gathered, an attempt to put forward a balanced summary of the arguments on both sides. I am trying merely to share my gut feeling that this is an issue of the most tremendous importance. It may, perhaps, seem to you that I have abused the hospitality of this column by raising an issue of purely parochial interest to issue is of much wider significance than that, that it raises questions about the nature and the reconciling mission of the Church which are important to all denominations. And, of course, to Toc H.

Ken Prideaux-Brune

With Peter in Bangladesh



The school in Khasdobir, its second storey added thanks to the generosity of Toc H members, now has 1,300 pupils instead of the 700 it was able to cope with previously. A unique initiative launched by Peter East and the Khasdobir Youth Action Group is the 'school under the sky', where four and five year olds learn to read and write in preparation for starting at the main school – some 300 of them moved on in January, the start of the Bangladesh school year.

We gratefully acknowledge a further grant of £1,500 from Help the Aged towards the Action Group's continuing work with the elderly and destitute people in the village. Altogether the Action Group estimates it will need £11,000 this year to fund its individual work with people in need, the 'schools under the sky' and the recently initiated workshops through which local people are developing skills in sewing and basket making.

Bangladeshis in Poperinge

Last summer a group of 13 Bangladeshi young people, members of the Progressive Youth Organisation in the East End of London, visited Talbot House, Poperinge. We print below extracts from the report written by the leader of the group, Helalur Rahman.

In 1915 Tubby Clayton opened Talbot House, where British soldiers found a warm welcome and a home from home. For many of them the intimate atmosphere of the attic chapel was a last oasis. The Upper Room still has an atmosphere of its own.

The people of Poperinge speak Flemish. Most of the people are very friendly and hospitable. The young people are very charming. They are easily accessible to help with anything. Most of them speak English. The population of Poperinge is not very large so the town is very clean and tidy.

We stayed in Talbot House. It was like home. Some of us could not find any

difference between home and Talbot House except the absence of family members.

A meeting was arranged with the Belgian young people (from Tubby's Poperinge Group). In the first part of the meeting we introduced ourselves. Then the main discussion took place about culture, language, history and heritage etc. Our next programme was set up by our partners for Dikkebus, a quiet, green, hilly place, surrounded by water. This was really an enjoyable place for everybody to spend an evening.

There were so many activities which we did with our Belgian partner group. They were very helpful. We did a day outing with them. In the morning they took us to a Flemish national independence monument. In the afternoon we had a picnic and then went roller skating near Ostend. Most of our young people had no experience of this so it was quite exciting fun for them. The place was attractive and young people were friendly.

Another day our partner group booked the swimming pool for both groups. It was good fun. That evening we went to a disco together. About half of our group members know break dancing. In the disco a lot of people were known to our Belgian friends and they told the manager that some knew how to break dance. They played break dancing music and our young people performed. By doing this we became known to almost everybody in the town and we became respected guests.

The day before we left Poperinge a party was arranged for us in Talbot House with a huge variety of Belgian foods. After our meal we had a discussion and then some of our members demonstrated break dance and one member demonstrated kungfu. Belgian young people demonstrated Flemish and Scottish dancing. All these things were very enjoyable and we learnt a lot from each other.

Round and about

Historic Pageant

Bob Stewart writes: *'Uxbridge Branch has its Headquarters in Ickenham, one of Greater London's "villages". Its Parish Church is a haven of peace around which suburban and London-bound traffic flows incessantly. The beautiful church of St Giles surveys it all from a vantage point it has occupied for 650 years. The rather shorter history of Toc H covering 70 years nevertheless became a shared Anniversary with this Church in a recent event. For one week St Giles presented a historical pageant of its life. Compressed into the form of one evening's entertainment it could be no more than a skip through history. With the interior of the church as a backdrop and players in costume there were scenes like a medieval baptism, an Elizabethan wedding and the meeting in Ickenham of Lord and Lady Vyner with Samuel Pepys. All of it led up to the two World Wars and the emergence of Toc H. In a final scene conjuring up the horrors of war the Branch Lamp of Toc H was centred upon. Flanked by men and women dressed in Service uniforms a Toc H member spoke of the Old House, the re-birth of the Movement and read the Main Resolution. Thanksgiving for the past and a charge for the future came in the alternative wording of the Ceremony of Light. It was a moving moment after sharing together so much history but the Rector, the Revd Paul Kelly, clearly saw that the words adopted by Toc H were fitting ones to use when marking 650 years of continuing Christian witness in the church of St Giles.'*

Kent Holiday with Handicapped Children

For the 14th year in succession the South East Kent District has organised and run a holiday with handicapped children. For a week at the end of July part of The Towers Secondary School in Ashford was transformed into a holiday camp, with beds provided by the Army, other equipment by another school for the disabled and from the District's own accumulated resources, food cooked by the School Kitchen staff, and Care Staff drawn from Toc H Volunteers.

This year's group of 15 volunteers was a very mixed collection indeed, covering a wide spectrum of colour, background, environment, occupation and expertise – a real Toc H mixture in fact! The one common factor was the

desire to serve and they did this to the full. Within a very short time these young people blended together into a homogenous team and, from the viewpoint of a discerning Toc H observer privileged to be present, (a certain Jack Morley) this was a microcosm of how mankind could and should live.

In this spirit they gave these children a marvellous holiday which included visits to the seaside and countryside, to a Zoo Park, funfair and the Smallest Public Railway in the World, swimming and boating parties. They enjoyed all the amenities of a modern school where they were visited by a Super Policewoman Pat, by the local Fire Brigade and the Mayor and Mayoress of Ashford.

Once again a combined effort of Toc H Branches, financially supportive commercial, voluntary and national organisations, many local individuals and a splendid team of volunteers had given 14 handicapped girls and boys a holiday to remember.

What's a Cavitron?

We had no idea what a Cavitron is, so we asked. And we found out that it is 'an Ultrasonic Scalpel with a titanium tip which vibrates at 23,000 times a second. Tumours are pulverised and sucked away by a computer-controlled suction system, linked to the handpiece, without affecting other tissues'. At which point we were almost sorry we asked. But Eric Body, secretary of Launceston, Cornwall, Branch describes it more simply as 'an instrument for removing tumours from the head'.

Why this sudden interest in Cavitrons? And where does Eric Body of Launceston fit into the picture? Simply that Launceston arranged an Old Tyme dance which raised £150 towards the cost of a Cavitron for the local hospital.

Bridlington TAG at Mundesley

One of the first projects at the new Toc H Centre at Mundesley, Norfolk, was the children's holiday run by the TAG from Bridlington, Yorks. The 17 children were chosen by Bridlington social services. Rain meant that the group spent more time in the swimming baths than on the beach and that the last night barbecue had to be abandoned. But, says TAG secretary Julie Cockerill, 'it was a lovely week, enjoyed by everyone, so we were all sad to go home'.

Granny Vera's book

'I would like to thank all the members of Toc H for their help and hospitality shown to me on my walk', writes Vera Andrews, widely known as Granny Vera after her extraordinary achievement of walking the entire coastline of Britain. 'I really enjoyed meeting your members. It was like a breath of fresh air as everyone was so friendly', she says. She has published a diary of her walk under the title of 'I've seen Granny Vera'. It costs £2.50 plus 45p p&p and can be ordered from Vera at 37 Elm Grove, Clacton-on-Sea, Essex CO1 45DL. Meanwhile Vera herself is preparing for her next exploit, Lands End to John O'Groats, starting in May.

Very much alive

Porlock Men's Branch in Somerset is 'still alive and kicking' writes Dennis Corner, Branch secretary. Membership of the Branch is down to ten but the monthly guest nights attract 30-40 each time. In December the Branch held its 31st annual party for older people with the aid of the Scouts, WI and many other local people. This month there will be the annual children's party. Altogether an encouraging example of how much even the smallest Branch can achieve by fully involving its local community.

Christmas Gift Shop

Every other year for the past 30 years Grays Women's Branch in Essex has run a Christmas Gift Shop. In the early years the Branch obtained the use of an empty shop but as the scale of the operation grew they had to hire a church hall. This year's Shop raised £440. Kath Kirby, Branch Treasurer, tells us that, in accordance with normal practice, half the proceeds have been sent to the Family Purse, the other half going to support local work by Toc H and other charities.

And briefly . . .

. . . Twydale Branch recently held a very successful party for about 45 housebound elderly people. They were transported by minibus kindly loaned by Age Concern, and enjoyed an afternoon which included an entertainer, bingo, a free raffle, and the Mayor of Gillingham and her escort arrived early and stayed late!

Personality Point

Welcome

to **George Berry** who joined the Headquarters staff as Personnel and Training Officer on 1 December. He has 25 years experience in personnel management. Most recently he worked for the Hertfordshire Careers Service, working with the long-term unemployed. He is married with four grown-up daughters and lives in Little Chalfont, Bucks. He was at one time a keen gardener but, he says, 'since I discovered golf I've had very little time for the garden'.

to **Arthur Montgomery** our new Fund Raiser/Public Relations Officer at Headquarters. Born and educated in Northern Ireland, Arthur has worked in newspaper management for more years

than he cares to remember. Most recently he was Joint Managing Director of Thomson Regional Newspapers Ltd. He is married with two daughters and lives in Tring, Herts.

to **Melanie Stephenson** who joined the staff in October to work with Friendship Circles in Cleveland. Melanie has already spent a year with Friendship Circles as an MSC worker and several months as a volunteer so she's no stranger to us but we're glad to welcome her on to the full time staff. She's married with one three year old child.

and finally our apologies to **Neville Wilkinson**, LTV at Leicester. The gremlins struck in December and he was welcomed as **Neville Williamson**. So, let us welcome him again under his proper name.

The following new members were registered during November/December.

Patrick R Gwynne (Avon District), **Miss Janet Bartram**, **Andrew J Constant**, **Kevin Constant**, **Mrs Angela D Ram**, **Jita J Ram**, **Timothy J Matthews**, **Peter R Nutting** (Bedford Youth J Group), **Mrs Florence M Delaney** (Bromborough), **Mrs Margaret Peacock**, **Richard Peacock** (Cleveland District), **Mrs Sarah G Beveridge**, **Mrs Agnes W Peattie**, **Graham Peattie** (Denny J), **Mrs Winifred G Talbot** (Downend W), **Miss Sharon Wheeler** (Greathouse J), **Mrs Vera Jordon** (Hemel Hempstead W), **Mrs Eileen E Purser**, **Frederick W Purser**, **Mrs G M Williams** (Kempston J), **Albert Cobb** (Melton Mowbray M), **Mrs Vera Marshall** (Mochdre J), **John I Hobson** (Morecambe J), **Colin McNab** (Ouse & Hull District), **Mrs Edna M Ballham**, **Miss Phyllis Cooper**, **Mrs Eileen M Rogers** (Penn W), **Mrs Audrey E Prior** (Rushden W), **Mrs H M Bullock** (Sutton (Birmingham) J).

A warm welcome to 29 new members



Photo: Army Public Information

CENTRAL COUNCIL

In our report of Central Council Noel Cornick was described as Chairman of the Talbot House Association. He was in fact at Council representing the President of the Association, Jack Trefusis. Our apologies to Noel and Jack.

A reluctant prize winner at the Toc H playscheme in Verden, Germany. **Debby Cooke** (centre) persuades **Philip Gardiner** to receive his prize from **Lady Anne Thorne** (left), wife of the commander of 1st Armoured Division.

WORSHIPPING THE ONE GOD

Eight Toc H members were among those who attended the annual Conference of the World Congress of Faiths. One of them, Hugh Potts, West Midlands & South Wales Regional Padre, contributes this report of an illuminating weekend.

An invitation to me from Tom Gulliver to attend the September meeting in Leicester of the World Congress of Faiths aroused my interest. I accepted and enjoyed a unique experience which amply fulfilled my suspicion that my foggy recollections of the 'heathen in his blindness bowing down to wood and stone' were far from the truth.

Over 50 of us came to the conference and were housed in Villiers Hall, a University residential hostel, and were looked after to perfection. Leicester, be it noted, is the largest Hindu city outside India.

The theme of the conference was 'The Worshipping Community', and actual experience of the various communities worship and way of life predominated over discussion.

The full programme on Saturday began with instruction on what we were to see and after that we were in at the deep end! First we visited a Hindu temple where worship was in full swing. Unlike

Christians who worship on Sundays, the Hindus worship twice weekly. From outside the temple was an unprepossessing red brick item in a street. Within it was an ample space, no seats or pews, four shrines or focal points all gaily lit and highly coloured, to which the worshippers moved in turn, chanting litanies, accompanied by gongs and occasionally conch shells. All ages took part from delightful little people to aged grannies and grandpas. There is one God only but he is worshipped under a variety of different aspects.

Our next call was to the Sikh temple which by contrast was very austere as one would expect from a reformed offshoot of Hinduism. Oddly enough the Sikh breakaway took place about the same time as our own English reformation. In either case a lot of the more cheerful and demonstrative sides of worship have been shed. The Sikhs were overwhelmingly friendly and insisted that we ate before leaving. Hospitality to everyone is their rule. Although we were already overdue

at our own lunch we felt bound to accept the food offered us, before tackling our proper meal in the hostel!

As soon as lunch was over we were off again to the Islamic Mosque, which once again was surprisingly spacious and light compared with its very unpretentious exterior. Here, once again seated shoeless on the floor, we listened to an explanation of the faith. Of the Moslem's rule of life the obligation to pray five times a day at stated times recalled to me very clearly the opening precept of our own Toc H Main Resolution 'To listen now and always . . .' All these religions abstain from alcohol and tobacco. In addition Sikhs never cut their hair, regarding it as an inviolable part of the body. Moslems separate the sexes for worship.

Our day ended with a visit to the Jain temple, which is not yet complete. Exteriorly unimpressive, inside it will be very elaborate and noble, as will befit the only Jain temple in Europe. Jainism is



Photo: North Wales Weekly News

Branch Pilot Reg Plimmer tries out the new seat presented by Conwy Branch. The seat is for the use of residents of a new estate for elderly people built within the ancient walls of Conwy.

akin to Buddhism in being a way of life concentrating on a spiritual discipline which will free the worshipper to fulfil his immortal destiny. Its central doctrine is 'Ahimsa' or non-violence. The day was not over yet and an entertainment by Asian young people awaited us after supper in the form of their own poetry readings and a playlet of their own devising and portraying some of the differences of living in two cultures. The conference ended with an act of devotion in which seven faiths were represented.

I came away very uplifted by the realisation that all these faiths worship One God, and humbled by their practice of frequent family worship, and acceptance of abstinences which could make our own life in this land a lot happier.

We all owe Tom Gulliver a tremendous debt of gratitude for the most demanding work put in by him behind the scenes. He has given us an experience quite invaluable for the day and age we live in.

How we can help

Toc H Branches can join the inter-faith fellowship by affiliation. This would be particularly appropriate in areas of mixed population. Contact the Hon Membership Secretary, World Congress of Faiths, 28 Powis Gardens, London W11 1JG.

We will Remember...

We regret to announce the death of the following members:

In August

Alice Amy Bolwell (Shirehampton)

In November

Alexander E Aikman (Lincoln), James 'Jim' Blake (Inner London District) Reginald Bland (Wellingborough), Doris G Cannell (Gorleston), George R Clewley (South Staffs & Wulfrun District) Hilda O'Brien (Taunton), Victor H Perry (Clevedon), Glyn Roberts (Shavington).

Eva Maud Daniel, died on 7 October aged 79, after a short illness. A founder member of Mablethorpe Branch in 1952 she served as Chairwoman, District Team member and Central Councillor. Never an idle person she at various times ran a guest house and a cafe. Her skill as a pastrycook and confectioner was well known and she delighted in creating wedding, Christmas and birthday cakes, a speciality in which she excelled. Her ability to shrug off and make little of personal adversities made her a cheerful personality, and she will be sadly missed by a wide circle of friends.

Frank Tipple was one of the founder members of Fakenham, Norfolk Branch. Albert Pullinger writes: 'He held different jobs in the Branch over the years and was secretary until illness overtook him. He was the Branch comedian and, with the Branch Glee Singers, entertained

with his yarns and jokes in Norfolk brogue. He was a member of the local Methodist church, holding the posts of Society Steward and Church Secretary. He was a magistrate and a school governor. He was on the Regional Hospital Board committee and was secretary of the local Engineering Union for 20 years. He will be much missed in the Branch and in the town.'

Jim Blake 'who died in November was a person of great charm, generosity and integrity', writes John Morgan. Although he had undergone considerable major surgery in recent years he did not complain and made light of his discomfort. He did not always agree with the 'establishment', particularly over the Marks, but nevertheless remained a loyal member of Toc H. Apart from a short spell on the Central Executive he also served both as Chairman of the South Eastern Region and the Mark 2 Management Committee, and at the time of his death was Chairman of Inner London District. His counsel will be sorely missed.

Alexander 'Sandy' Aikman, who died in November was closely involved in the design and construction of Prideaux House, Hackney, the former Mark 3, which is now the headquarters of the Friends Anonymous Service. On their return to Lincoln both he and his wife Elizabeth joined Lincoln Branch and Sandy served as chairman. A keen musician, he was a member of two Lincoln choirs and had recently enrolled in a recorder class.

We give thanks for their lives



Some of the happy faces at the first ever Thanet District disco for disabled people, held at Strode Park Home, Herne, Kent. The experiment was rated a definite success.

Photo: Herne Bay Times

So much to learn f

John Dickson reports on last summer's visit to South Africa by six volunteers from the UK.

This is not an easy article to write. As the leader of the first group of South African Volunteers, I want to write a report for Point Three. The problem is not what I should say, but what I can leave out. There were five other members of the team. Thelma Jackson, Peter Ranken, Julia Sivyver, Malcolm Jackson, Sarah Husband, and we were there for almost exactly three months. So please bear with what will be a few personal impressions and recollections.

There are mixed feelings about South Africa, but I hope to show that the situation is far more complex, than most people in this country have so far seen. Here I can only look at this from the point of view of people in Toc H in South Africa. If Toc H had announced that a party would not travel to South Africa, because of the political situation there, or as a statement against apartheid, what would this do? It would bend, and maybe even break, the ties between Toc H here and in South Africa, and I am sure that it would have no effect on their government. That would only make sense if the attitude of the government and Toc H were the same.

We arrived in South Africa during the worst period of unrest. I believe the number of people killed now exceeds 800, and the troubles are far from over. This makes the situation worse than Sharpeville, or the 1976 Soweto riots. What did it feel like, many people have

asked? Like being in the middle of a whirlwind. It was still and calm in the middle where we were, but we were aware of violence all around. You must remember that the black people are the ones being killed, only a handful of whites have died in the unrest. Attitudes are changing amongst the whites, who do now talk about sharing power, an unheard of thing when I was there ten years ago.

I don't want to write a report on the politics of the situation, but we cannot ignore them, as these are the questions that people most often ask. We went there to help Toc H SA to involve young people. We spent the first month at the new Toc H National Centre, (see October Point Three) which is being built near Carletonville, 70kms to the west of Johannesburg. We had three different groups of South African volunteers, each staying with us for a week. Each party was racially mixed, as well as being drawn from three different parts of the Republic, although we had only a black teacher from Selokeng near Vereeniging on the first week, and a young coloured evangelist from Ocean View near Cape Town on the second week. The best mix we had was on the middle week when half the South African volunteers were from Soweto, and the others were whites from Port Elizabeth and Durban.

Each week was designed to be a project; as they had only what we had told them to work on, the South Africans set them up very well. We had some work with people on each week: a three day residential holiday for mentally

handicapped young adults, a day's visit from some lovely children from Soweto and a small group of poor white children from Krugersdorp, who also joined us for a holiday. The rest of the time was spent building a tree house (more like a jungle gym), building a braai (what the South Africans call a barbecue), creating an assault course, and working on erosion control (a peculiarly South African occupation). The important thing is that all this was done with black and white people eating, living and working together.

Of course, a small group of volunteers can't change the course of a country. Most South Africans never came into contact with us or with Toc H. However if there is to be peaceful change within the country, then there must first be reconciliation between the various racial groups in South Africa.

I would hope to hear less strident advice to South Africa, now that we have seen riots of our own. There are tremendous pressures of unemployment, low wages, poor education, restrictive and discriminating laws, which all lead to the violence. I have no doubt that all the non-white groups in South Africa are very angry, and that is the main driving force for unrest. To hear our government blaming the riots here on criminal behaviour and political agitation sounds like a direct quote from the South African government. I agree that people do exploit the situation, but people do not face armed police, armed only with rocks, for these reasons alone. We can also see from the South African



Photos: Peter Ranken

Making friends at Carletonville.



Mine company cast-offs make an impromptu playground.

from South Africa

experience that killing demonstrators doesn't stop riots.

So while all the riots were going on we showed that a group of 18 very different people could get on together and work together, as equals, for a week. I would claim that we have made progress. We got beyond just getting on together, and formed real relationships. We had black volunteers telling us how South African politics looked from their point of view. They were even able to be critical of us, in the way that we had planned and run their week, a sure sign of trust and respect. To have a young man, Vusi Kaunda from Soweto, put his hand on my shoulders and call me 'Brother John', is a great compliment, and will be something that I will always remember.

Toc H is about breaking down barriers, and that means taking risks, and the risks are very real in South Africa. It is a society riven with fear, hatred, anger and violence. Yet there Toc H is slowly building bridges between the various racial groups. There are more than enough people, in all racial groups, to make that well worth doing. They face up to opposition, rejection and general apathy. Toc H in South Africa is alive and well. It has strength and confidence, and if I had got nothing else out of my visit, that would have been worth finding.

We talk about working with other races, in a land where most people bend over backwards to help make that happen, but I see very little result. In South Africa they don't have that consensus, they have all kinds of laws, habits and customs that make it difficult, so why are they making better progress? I think we have a log to put out of our eye, before we look at the mote in the eye of Toc H South Africa.

I blame myself in not getting people from other races involved in Toc H. If Toc H is to be a rich mix, that is our new challenge. In South Africa they are well down that road. Dare I say that they have a lot to teach us? To give one example: How do you get started? You don't put forward something that you think will appeal to West Indians, and then go and get them involved. You go to places where the white face is the exception, and make it clear that you are offering yourself, and Toc H. How do they want to use that? The trick is to realise that goodwill is not enough. Most people will mistrust your motives; you cannot demand trust, you have to earn it. That may be a long slow painful process. The young blacks we knew from Soweto were under peer



The tree house turned out more like a jungle gym.

group pressure not to associate with a 'white' organisation like Toc H. In extreme cases they could even be risking personal violence. Yet we only think of things from our point of view. You earn trust and respect by taking risks and exposing yourself to rejection.

The Toc H Centre is somewhere where this process can take place. Several people called it neutral territory. What we were trying to do could not take place in Johannesburg or Soweto, and yet we were just an hour's drive away. We as outsiders got away with more, because all South Africans knew we did not know the background.

After one month at the Centre we went on a tour of the major cities meeting Toc H there. We also met most of the volunteers again, this time on their home ground. In four places we left young people talking about setting up a Toc H group. In Port Elizabeth it looks like they will run their first project in 1986. The Durban people will ask the next volunteers who go out to South Africa to help build a Community Centre in the Valley of a Thousand Hills, which is as romantic as it sounds. However this beautiful spot is blighted by real poverty, polluted water, and lack of health care. The Valley Trust and Toc H have worked

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Another group of volunteers will be visiting South Africa this summer; and four South African volunteers will be taking part in projects in this country. Anyone interested in being part of the UK party to visit South Africa in 1987 should contact the International Office at Wendover.

Geoff Martin

In view of Geoff's long association with Toc H international work, and particularly in South Africa, the gifts made to Toc H in his memory have been put towards the efforts of Toc H Natal to establish a Community Care Centre in the Valley of a Thousand Hills.

together in the valley for over 30 years. They set up Unompilo (Community Health Workers). They are trained in primary health care, like the Chinese barefoot doctor scheme. The new Centre will be a base for them and for trained nurses to work, so that people do not have to come all the way to the Valley Trust.

Then there are our Soweto friends. I am not sure what they will do. They turned up in force at the South African Council. A nice touch is that anybody can attend, member or non-member, and speak. It is a completely open meeting — of course only the delegates can vote. Vusi Kaunda has already taken a party from the YMCA in Soweto, and run a weekend at the Centre. So much has happened that I feel we have proved that young South Africans have a real interest in Toc H, and that after all was why we went out there.

We left with fewer answers than when we first arrived. It had been a great learning experience for us all. I know it is the best piece of work I have ever done in Toc H. So I would like to thank you for making it possible. I can recommend this to any of the young or young at heart, who would like to test themselves, on the toughest project that Toc H has to offer.

Athelderus, Toc H in the First Century

Frank Topping

It was the night of the World Chain of Light when Harry Mills, Robin Nash (the curate at Lymington) and myself were standing in the Parish Church of Milford-on-Sea. We were discussing the service which had been devised by Charles Potts when he was in Uganda.

We were concerned about how the Ceremony of Light could be achieved at exactly 9 o'clock. The Lymington Branch had used this Chain of Light service last year and as far as anyone could remember it had worked out rather well. It was just a matter of pacing the prayers and readings up to the appointed time.

This year's World Chain of Light service was taking the form of a minor Area Rally with members from Lymington, Milford, the New Forest area and along the coast to Bournemouth. All went well until at 20 minutes to nine I realised that the only items to be performed between now and the striking of the hour were a reading and a hymn. A slight feeling of panic began to creep into my veins as it slowly dawned on me that I was going to have to find some way of filling in a 15 minute gap. My eyes flicked to the reading and I saw the familiar words, 'as you did it unto the least of these my brethren you did it unto me'. At that point Athelderus leaped into my mind and it occurred to me what a good Toc H member he would have made.

You may well be asking, who on earth is Athelderus? Well, Athelderus according to legend was the fourth wise man. This legend says that there were not three wise men but four, Caspar, Melchior, Balthazar and Athelderus. Now they all set out at the same time but the fact is that whilst the first three wise men hardly ever took their eyes off the star, Athelderus was curious about everything, the country, the climate and the people. So, whilst the other three were star-gazing, it was Athelderus who noticed a family begging at the roadside. It was Athelderus who got off his horse to enquire about the begging family. The last that the three wise men heard of Athelderus was his voice shouting after them, 'Don't stop, I'll catch you up'.

Of course he never did catch them up. Being a good Toc H'er (without knowing it) Athelderus became completely immersed in the problems of the begging family.

Now as you know, all the wise men carried gifts, gold, frankincense and myrrh and in Athelderus's case precious

gems. It was here that he sold a large portion of the gems in order to help the family he had met on the road.

By the time he reached Israel, he had missed the great events. The other three wise men had returned home by a different route and the child in the stable was in hiding in Egypt.

Athelderus made his way home. But when he reached the territory of Barradan, he found that the villages and towns had been devastated by a plague, and being the sort of chap that he was, Athelderus stayed to see if he could help the sick, hungry and dying. He never did return home. Well, you know how one thing leads to another. He became so immersed in the welfare of the people of Barradan that the years slipped by almost without him noticing.

It was a traveller who told him about the man called Jesus who was healing the sick and giving sight to the blind in all the villages and towns around Gallilee.

Athelderus once more set out to take his gift to Jesus, but he had only one precious stone left, a priceless diamond. Of course, now you know the sort of chap Athelderus is and you will not be surprised to learn that he had not gone very far before coming across people in such need that he was compelled to sell his diamond in order to help them.

He did find Jesus in the end. Naturally he was sad that he had nothing to give him. Athelderus sat amongst a group of people on a hillside listening to Jesus preach and it seemed to the fourth old wise man that Jesus was looking directly at him when he said:

'I was hungry and you fed me.
I was thirsty and you gave me drink.
I was naked and you clothed me.
Inasmuch as you did it unto the least of these my brethren,
you did it unto me.'

I finished my story, we sang a hymn, we began the Ceremony of Light and the clock struck nine.

Just Imagine!

It should not be difficult to imagine a bus, a house, or a boat. From that beginning it is not beyond possibility to imagine changes to these objects. A boat without a sail, a house without a roof or a bus without seats.

Let's stay with the bus. Imagine a double deck bus without any seats. What can you do with that apart from putting the seats back? How about beds upstairs to sleep eight people? A toilet would be essential as would a kitchen and somewhere to sit and eat. Some storage place would be needed. All upstairs.

What about the downstairs? A coffee bar for guests. Some seating with room for storage underneath. An area, safely boxed in for the Calor Gas cylinders for heating and cooking. A play area at the back for children, with sand and water tray. A bookcase with a good selection of books and, in the underseat storage, lots of toys and games.

On the outside of the bus a bright orange awning that can be fixed just above the downstairs windows to pull out and with side panels fitted it immediately becomes a stage or extra space for plays, concert, stalls, extra exhibition space. A generator provides extra power for lighting, music, loud speaker to attract custom.

Can you imagine all that? There is no need really, because it exists. It's big and bright and mobile and can be hired for use at galas, Garden Parties, projects, exhibitions, in fact all kinds of events.

Enquiries to:

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Rotherham S61 41P

Forthcoming Events

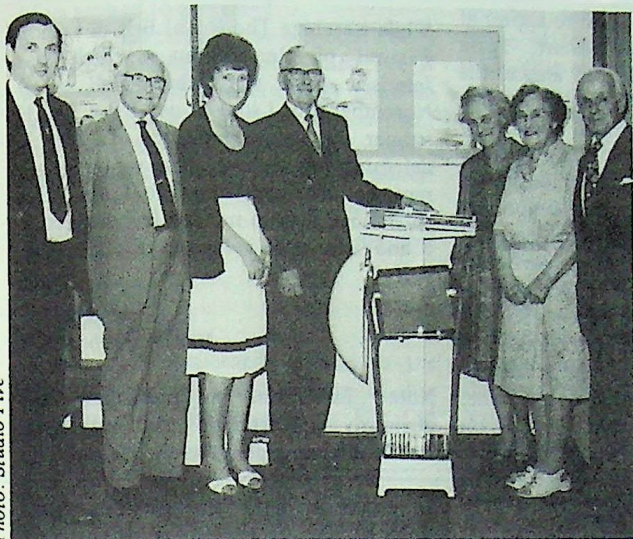
February	1	CEC, Newark Street	
	14/16	SW Region Volunteers Weekend, Lindridge House	
	15	N West & N Wales Regional Council	
March	14/16	Leckylake Project, Cheltenham, Glos	Open
	15	CEC, Newark Street	
		SW Regional Council, Wellington, Somerset	
	27/31	Holiday for Mentally Handicapped Adults, Cuddesdon	Open
	27 to		
April	3	Leckylake Project, Cheltenham, Glos	Open
	4/ 6	New Games weekend	Open
	7/12	Exploring Dartmoor, Leisure Week, Lindridge House	Open

National Youth Weekend

Plans are being made for a National Youth Weekend later this year. Details of date and venue will be announced in Point Three as soon as these are fixed.

Watch this space!

Photo: Studio Five



Members of Cam District present a set of scales to the local Health Clinic. The money had been raised by Brandon, Cambridge and Ely Branches.



National Chaplain Frank Topping (second from right) was the speaker at an Area Rally in Wolverton, Bucks, which was attended by over 200 people. Seen with Frank are (l to r) Eric Swannell (chairman Wolverton Men), Tim Day (staff), Edie Marshall (chairman, Wolverton Ladies) and Colin Rudd (staff). This successful gathering nearly didn't happen. The hall which had been booked was burned down just three days beforehand. However another school hall in the same campus was made available.

Photo: John Burgess



Toc H Marsh Farm Group joined with the Quainton Road Steam Preservation Society for a 24 hour Push-Trolley Marathon. The trolley completed over 131 miles, and they hope to raise over £400 towards a Toc H narrow boat. Another similar event will take place in 1986, on August Bank Holiday Monday.



The interior of Kettering (M) Branch's charity shop which raised £320. This enabled the Branch to run their annual outing to the pantomime for lonely old people, and to develop the deaf-aid system for those living alone.

Photo: Northamptonshire Evening Telegraph

Open Forum

My CND year

1985 was a pretty eventful year for me in respect of CND campaigning. A notable event was a frost-bound visit to the Rainbow Fields Peace Camp at Molesworth (the planned second cruise missile base). There was a general invitation extended to visitors just after Christmas (so in fact this was just in 1984). It was a privilege to experience the enthusiasm and the spirit of sharing, as well as the hardships, of such a group not long before the great eviction in February.

On another visit to Molesworth in May, just for a look-see, I became involved in a two man demo. This resulted in arrest for 'obstructing the highway' although our crime was merely to be seated on the grass verge of a quiet, country lane; but a lane which leads to one of the entrances to the base.

Close together, on November 9 and 10, I took part in two contrasting campaigning activities. On the ninth I was one of several people who cut, or attempted to cut, through the perimeter

fence surrounding Molesworth base. This is a symbolic action. The tool of choice is a hacksaw blade and the police are notified in advance of time and place. I was duly arrested. The next day I was one of many ex-service men and women who paraded for the Whitehall Remembrance Day service. As well as their medals, our group wore with pride their ex-service CND badges.

On 2 December I had to appear at Huntingdon magistrates' court, again wearing campaign medals, to answer the charge of interfering with the Molesworth fence. Besides the inevitable tension of such an experience, it was greatly rewarding to share the companionship of the other activists as well as supporters and to listen to the varied testimonies of those answering charges. In my particular case I was perhaps at a disadvantage in being the first person called. So my impassioned speech was jettisoned and cut to bare bones. Otherwise it seemed likely that the magistrate would intervene. The words I used were based on something seen in print which impressed

me and seemed to fit my case. It was along these lines; that the justification, and inspiration, for my actions could be summarised as being due to enlightened self-interest. Ponder on those words.

Richard Crump
Carsharilton, Surrey

Festival of Remembrance

While watching The Royal British Legion Festival of Remembrance which was televised from the Albert Hall on 9 November last, I looked out for a Toc H banner or some mention of Toc H delegates, but all in vain. Do we no longer receive an invitation to join this ceremony? Or can no Toc H members be found who will volunteer for a colour party?

Alan Mason
Market Harborough

Note: Invitations to participate are obviously a matter for the organisers. Toc H is invited at intervals. We were, in

Human Embryo Research

for

To a great many people embryology raises again the spectre of the search for the perfect race. The tabloid press either tries to frighten us with thoughts of latter day Frankensteins, or it becomes positively euphoric about the future of humanity once the scientists have finally got it all right! Even the more literary end of the media occasionally falls prey to gloomy predictions based on Huxley's *Brave New World*. Fears and misconceptions often accompany new research, especially when that research enters areas which are fundamental to human life. It must be acknowledged that such fears about this growing body of knowledge are not totally without foundation, for all knowledge can be abused, sometimes with horrendous consequences. Fear of abuse, however, is not an adequate reason for rejecting a

source of action which could also bring immense benefits to mankind. The man who was criticised in the Parable of the Talents, remember, was the one who buried his gift in the ground for fear he should make a mistake. In the end he lost everything.

So let us curb our fears for a while and consider just what those involved in this work are offering to us all.

The birth of Lousie Brown was, for scientists, the most significant birth this century, for Lousie Brown was the first 'test tube' baby. Her birth heralded a new era in our understanding of the very beginning of human growth and development.

For the first time it has been possible to remove a human egg from a woman's ovary, mix it with human sperm to achieve fertilisation and transfer the embryo to the mother's uterus. Not only

Is research into human embryos, with all its potential for both good and evil, a 'talent' we dare not lock away or an example of humanity's dangerous arrogance? The argument arouses powerful feelings and raises fundamental moral issues. We are grateful to Pauline Rudd and Frank Rice, both Toc H members (and, incidentally, good friends) for agreeing to set out the two sides of the argument for us.

were a previously infertile couple able to have a child, but that child was in every way normal and healthy. In the beginning the aim was solely to enable infertile couples, who could be helped in no other way, to have children. Immediately a further responsibility emerged, for no doctor would wish to implant an embryo which would develop into a child with some serious genetic disorder like Down's syndrome, haemophilia or cystic fibrosis which are so distressing and disabling.

Geneticists have known for many years that chromosomes carry information in the cells, and that abnormalities here lead to genetic diseases. We know that 50% of the foetuses which are miscarried in the first three months of ordinary pregnancy have either the wrong number of chromosomes, or abnormal ones. About 20% of embryos developed in the laboratory also have chromosome defects. Research which began by checking embryos to ensure that only healthy ones

fact, represented last November even though we did not rate a mention on television. We must hope for better luck when our turn next comes round.—Editor

'The Ladies'

However did 'the ladies' creep into Toc H? Have we been promoted by some of the gentlemen members, or have some of us aspired to gentility?

In earliest days we were the Toc H League of Women Helpers, then Toc H Women's Association. It is only since we became integrated in the one Movement that the new term has come into use. I wonder which the majority of us prefer!

Frances Beeton
Edinburgh

The Old House

I was most concerned to read in the recent issue of *Point Three* of the financial problems concerning The Old House.

I don't know how many members are in the Movement nowadays but feel that if a general appeal were made and we all really dug deep into our pockets and handbags we could surely raise enough to ensure that The Old House is secure for all time? Five pounds or more or less, according to circumstances would not break anyone surely. I'm of the 1926 vintage and have always thought that members would wish to visit The Old House at least once in a lifetime. I do think that we should all get something done, as soon as possible.

A E Bowyer
Havant

Communicating Toc H

I have briefly read the October Editorial which I am glad to see refers to the 'Main Resolution', the heart of Toc H, which I thought during the 70s tended to be submerged in the pre-occupation with 'projects'. With mechanical communication (phone, TV, radio and all

kinds of transport) increasing and becoming easier all the time, we sometimes forget to talk with one another and digest what the media is continually pumping in. As regards Toc H, I believe every member can help by speaking personally to others about what it means on every suitable occasion — as your last paragraph implies.

Perhaps one difficulty arises out of your penultimate sentence — how do we get those who are interested in trying Toc H to get involved. These days joining a Branch may not be easily available.

Could the Movement — exploiting an increasingly commercial ploy — afford to give, say, a six month free subscription to *Point Three* to recommended 'nibblers'? Alternatively members could be encouraged to pass on their copy regularly for a time, though some of us may take too long digesting a current issue!

Larry Holt-Kentwell
Oxford

were implanted opened up the possibility of achieving a better understanding of the causes of congenital disease.

But first things first! Before anything can be done with an embryo it has to develop in a culture medium. This is a solution which contains all the nutrients which the embryo needs. It has to be at the right temperature, in the right kind of light, and the nutrients have to be in the correct proportions. At present the medium used is selected on the basis of experiments carried out on mouse embryos, because, of course, we know practically nothing about the human ones. Scientists could establish an ideal culture if they were able to grow the fused egg and sperm in cultures with nutrients labelled with markers. After a short while the cells could be examined to see how much of each nutrient had been used.

Abnormalities detected

After the egg and the sperm have fused a process of division occurs when first two, then four and then eight cells appear and so on. At the point of the first division it is possible to separate the two cells, which are identical. By this means scientists would be able to check for any abnormalities in one set of cells before implanting an identical set into the mother.

Down's syndrome is easily detected by

counting the number of chromosomes in the cell — if there are 47 instead of the normal 46 the disease is present. Haemophilia is easily detected because it is sex linked — only males develop haemophilia although females may be carriers.

Other diseases, such as cystic fibrosis, are caused by much smaller defects in DNA (the genetic material which makes up chromosomes). The gene responsible for cystic fibrosis has just been identified and, with research, screening of embryos could follow.

For couples who know they run the risk of passing such diseases on to their children a way is now open for them to be sure that their child is free of disease before the pregnancy begins. They would be spared the agony of having to decide whether or not to terminate an established pregnancy when it is revealed at 12 weeks that their child has a congenital disease.

To move on from the needs of infertile couples or those at high risk from genetic disorders, the door is now open for us to gain insight into the causes of spasticity, underdeveloped people, sterility and subfertility. These have all been shown to be due to 'asynchronous development'. Simply this means that some cells of the embryo develop at a faster rate than others and the growth of the baby is unco-ordinated. We know that this

damage can be caused by radiation and by certain drugs such as mitomycin C used in the treatment of cancer. These kill off dividing cells momentarily, the embryo then recovers, but different parts of the cell recover at different rates. For example nerve cells recover faster than cells which build up muscle and bone, so when the baby is born it is unable to co-ordinate nerve and muscle in the normal way. It is also clear that such children are born to parents who have not been exposed to radiation or drugs, and embryo research would lead to further knowledge about other causes of these problems.

Valuable information

Many genetic disorders are thought to arise from faulty sperm. About 1/20 of human sperm have chromosome abnormalities. Very little is understood about the processes which immediately follow fertilisation although it seems that the egg does not use any genetic information from the sperm until it has divided once. More research here would yield valuable information about sperm and lead to improved methods of contraception.

For a while after fertilisation, perhaps up to the 2,000 cell stage, the new embryo has cells which are undifferentiated. After this time the cells become specialised and some will undergo changes which mean they are committed to develop into

Human Embryo Research contd

certain regions such as the fore brain, the gut and so on. A recent development has come from research into leukaemia where patients are successfully treated by replacing their own diseased bone marrow with healthy bone marrow. At present the replacement marrow is grown in the laboratory from marrow taken from the patient when the disease is in recession. There is always a risk that some diseased cells will remain and be infused back into the patient. It would be possible, with embryo research, to use cells which have differentiated into bone marrow cells and are totally free of disease.

Clearly one crucial decision which must be taken is to establish how far embryos can be allowed to develop in the laboratory. The legislation must be clear and have the support of those engaged in

the research. This in itself will discourage unacceptable research since nothing which is illegal would be accepted for publication.

Correcting genetic disorders may seem like a fantastic idea, but maybe one day, after sufficient time and care has been put into the research, it may be possible to correct a few of the diseases which have afflicted men and animals from time immemorial. Some bacteria or viruses play havoc with DNA, and once the coding sequences of the DNA have been damaged nothing short of genetic research will enable them to be repaired and prevent the damage being passed on from parent to child unceasingly. The responsibility to use and develop this knowledge in order to radically improve some people's quality of life has to be accepted by us all. Like all areas of knowledge it has the potential for good and evil. Maybe we can protect ourselves from misuse by rejecting it all, but maybe we should have more courage. I think we should have sufficient faith to believe that in this work we are co-operating with

the creator of all things to bring to birth the new creation for which we all yearn. For creation is a continuing process, a continuing struggle from darkness to light in which we all have a part to play. He who is the root and ground of our being is one with us in our suffering, our caring and our growing. We can step out into this unknown territory with confidence, but only if we recognise the sovereignty of love as we make the difficult decisions which lie ahead.

The first thing is to acquire wisdom;
Gain understanding though it cost you all
you have.

Do not forsake her, and she will keep you
safe;

Love her and she will guard you;

Cherish her and she will lift you high;

If only you embrace her, she will bring
you to honour.

She will set a garland of grace on your
head,

And bestow on you a crown of glory.

Proverbs 4

Pauline Rudd

against

The Warnock Report recommended legalising experiments on 'spare' human embryos up to 14 days old. The main aim of Enoch Powell's Unborn Children (Protection) Bill – which fell this summer owing to a procedural device – was to ban such experiments. On balance, I support Mr Powell rather than Dame Mary Warnock, though I am uneasily aware of some of the problems of this position.

Mr Powell is not a scientist. Nor am I. But to us this is a moral rather than a scientific problem. If all the medical and scientific experts agreed on the need for embryo research, I would still not be convinced that it should continue. (In, for example, child rearing, education and architecture, we have had unhappy results from blindly following 'expert' opinion.) But they don't agree. The Warnock Committee could not agree – nine signed the majority report and seven did not. Last February, 21 Fellows of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists wrote to *The Times* expressing their view that the Warnock majority recommendations 'reduce the status of the human embryo to that of an experimental animal, contravene the code of medical ethics and must be rejected'. Or take a special case. Warnock, arguing for the chance to defeat disease and deformity through embryo research, said: 'In certain instances, such as Down's syndrome, there is no substitute for the use of human embryos'. This claim was directly contradicted by Professor

Leyenne, one of the world's greatest living experts on Down's syndrome. Responding to Warnock, he wrote: 'To the best of my knowledge, no programme of research on Down's syndrome has yet been proposed using early human embryos. All the investigations . . . have been and will be performed on cells grown in vitro, coming from blood, or skin, or other tissue'.

Human dignity

What we see depends on where we stand. The Warnock majority took a utilitarian stance, looking only to what they saw as the greatest good of the greatest number. I share what I take to be Mr Powell's stance and what was certainly the position taken by the English Catholic bishops in their published response to Warnock. They accepted as a fact of modern life a distinction between private morality and state policy. But they argued that the rights of the individual do not stem, as Warnock suggested, from 'calculation of consequences' or 'strong sentiments' but from the dignity which is proper to 'all members of the species *homo sapiens*'. Mr Powell took a similar stance in the House when he actually invited members to assume that from embryo research 'useful and beneficial knowledge could in future be attained'. But for him – and for me – the moral cost of gaining such knowledge by a practice 'that outrages the instincts of so many is too great a price to pay'.

But when does an embryo become 'a member of the species *homo sapiens*'? No-one is likely to dispute that a new form of life appears at the moment of conception. When does that new life

become a human person with all the rights of a human person? No-one knows. The Catholic Church has always defended the rights of the human embryo from the moment of conception. Until very modern times, the mass of Catholic theologians (including Aquinas) considered that the new life became a human person with a soul at some later date – after 14 days, or much later still. The fact is that no-one knows. Current official Roman Catholic teaching remains uncertain, while continuing to insist on the uniqueness of the human embryo from the moment of conception. Even at the beginning, the human embryo is not just a mass of foetal jelly. The well known Vatican Declaration of 1974 points out that, 'ensouled' or not, it is clear from modern genetic studies 'that from the very first moment there is a fixed structure or genetic programme of this living being, namely a man, and this individual man is already equipped with all his own defined characteristics'. It would seem to follow that the kind of respect we owe this human embryo from the beginning is its right 'to continue in uninterrupted existence in its inherent progress towards personhood'. (Mahoney: *Bioethics and Belief*, 1985.)

Special status

Mr Powell wisely ignored this 'timing' argument, seeing it as irrelevant (besides being insoluble) when considering experimenting on human embryos to destruction. I also take this view – largely for one theoretical and one practical reason. In theory, I agree with Professor Marshall, a minority member of the Warnock Committee. He contends that, from the moment of conception, the



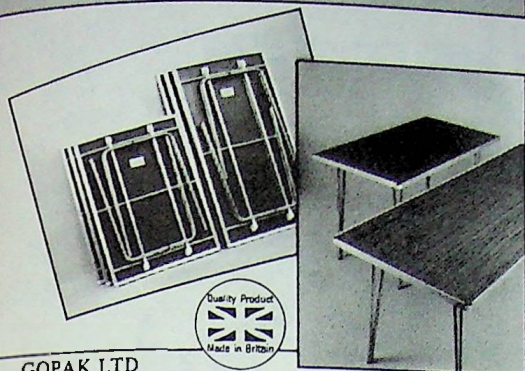
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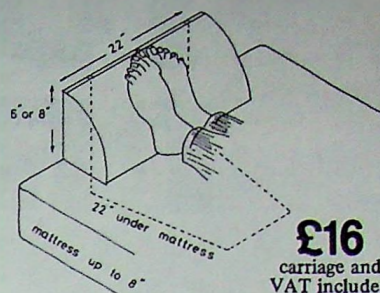
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human embryo has a special status which commands a special respect because it has the potential to develop into a full human person. And in practical terms, since no-one knows the moment at which the embryo actually becomes a human person, I find it difficult to fault Lord Denning's argument. He claims that the only 'safe and sensible' point at which to set the start of human life is at conception, since we know from experience that, in such matters, once an arbitrary time limit has been set, pressure immediately builds up to extend it — for all sorts of compassionate reasons. Indeed, Lady Warnock herself is reported to have said publicly, 'Of course the 14 day rule may be changed'.

Einstein once said, 'Make everything as simple as possible, but no simpler'. I find this a fiendishly complex moral problem with moral theologians, like scientists and members of the Warnock Committee, taking different sides. Of course, you and I must listen to the experts but in the end we must make up our own minds. Reading what I can, I have tried to make the issue 'as simple as possible' for me. The effort has not met with much success and I find myself longing for my younger days when it was easier to find and apply moral principles to medical and scientific ethics. Then, we knew when a man was dead. Now that machines can keep the vital organs functioning indefinitely, how can we know when the man is dead? As someone said recently, 'Where am I amongst all this machinery?' In those days, no-one dreamed — even in Nazi Germany — that human life could start in a doctor's dish, producing 'spares' that could be used for (hopefully) beneficial

results. But these changes can no more be 'disinvented' than can the nuclear bomb. We have to face them and decide how we will permit them to be used. Uneasily aware of the parable of the talents, I cannot believe that men were given inventive genius in order not to use it. But, in the very limited stage of our understanding of human life, I am sure that there are boundaries that we dare not cross. The search for knowledge is not, it seems to me, an absolute value: it has to be restrained and qualified by that respect for persons which the Christian would identify as 'love'. In this difficult area, you and I and all the non-experts (perhaps especially our MPs) must decide where we stand. If we don't, we shall not find ourselves living in line with rules made by the experts (though that would be horrifying enough!). We should be allowing these questions near the centre of the mystery of human life to be settled by rules fudged by experts who cannot agree among themselves.

These doubts and fears and instincts account for my present support of Mr Powell's Bill. Speaking in the House in February, he said: 'When I first read the Warnock Report, I had a sense of revulsion and repugnance, deep and instinctive, that a thing, however it is defined, of which the sole purpose or object is that it may be a human life, should be subjected to experiments to its destruction for the purpose of the acquisition of knowledge'. In the debate that followed, a large majority of MPs of all persuasions agreed with him. So did I.

Frank Rice



Frank
Sincerely,
Wally

Photo: Photocentre, Eastbourne

Wally Hawes, of Eastbourne (M) Branch, is 76 and still going strong! In his toastmaster outfit (complete with Toc H blazer badge) he is a familiar sight in Eastbourne when charity collections are being held. He recently raised £1,030 for the Variety Club in two week, shaking his tins in the local Cinema.

TOC H PROJECTS



step in to help this summer

The full list of 1986 Toc H work projects is now available. It offers the usual wide range of opportunities – playschemes for children, work with physically and mentally handicapped people and equally challenging conservation work.

In addition to the work projects Toc H is as usual, offering a range of leisure opportunities. These appear this year in a separate leaflet.

Details of work projects and leisure projects can be obtained now from:

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